WAR STORIES.

Recapture of the Crater Again.

Atlanta Journal.

Editor Journal: See some time ago in your valuable columns a request from a lady that some old veteran give his experience in the battle of the Crater, near Petersburg, Va., July 30, 1864, I have waited to see if some one better qualified to describe the scenes enacted there on that dreadful and never-to-be-forgotten day, but having waited in vain, I concluded to try in my feeble way to tell of some of the soul trying experiences of that day, also to give one of the closest calls I had during my entire period of service.

To begin with, the command to which I belonged, Wright's Georgia brigade, had about the 10th or 11th of July, 1864, been ordered to take position on the breastworks, where the Jerusalem plank road crossed the works, nearly, or quite, south of Petersburg, and afterwards was moved a little farther to the right and across the road, and then still farther to the right until we were about one mile from the above mentioned road.

As I remember, Wilcox's Alabama brigade, commanded by General Saunders, was on our left, Mahone's brigade on our right. These three brigades, Mahone's, Wright's and Wilcox's, were the ones detailed to recapture the works.

Wright's brigade had no general officer in command, but one of the colonels, I forget which, was in command. We were ordered up about 2 o'clock that morning and placed in position behind the works, just a few steps in front of where we were lying under our bush arbors, and after being there some time most of us had slipped back to our arbors to snatch another snooze, when just after daybreak we were rudely aroused from our peaceful slumbers by a horrible trembling of the earth, followed by a most terrific explosion, and then by one of the heaviest discharges of artillery and musketry I ever heard. We could see between us and the light of the eastern sky the smoke of shells as they hurtled through the air or burst in mid air, and it seemed to us the air was alive with them, while the huzzahs and yells of the combatants, combined with the other horrible sounds, seemed as if hell had torn loose sure enough. And right well we knew a terrible and sanguinary conflict was going on and we expected every moment to be ordered into the midst of it.

After waiting nearly two hours, we had orders to fall in, left face, and forward. We were rushed over hill and vale, with shells screaming overhead and an occasional bullet whistling by, and above all the roar the command, "close up, men." Finally we reached the Petersburg ice houses directly in the rear and about one-half mile from the crater, where we halted to let the rear catch up. Then forward again, up a zig-zag path cut round the hill and toward the front, with the wounded filing out, some on stretchers, some walking, some leaning on sticks or guns improvised as crutches; others being carried in blankets by four comrades, and all uniting in telling us boys "it's the worst place you ever saw. You'll never be able to retake it."

The groans and cries of agony, and the sufferings of these poor fellows we were obliged to pass, was enough to sicken the hearts of the bravest among us. When we got to the top of the hill where we could peep over the ditch and see the works, all we had heard seemed verified, for the captured works were bristling with battle flags and from the number indicated a strong force, but nothing daunted, on we pushed. About this time Mahone's brigade, which was in front of us, was ordered to charge, and right gallantly did they respond, and although met by a withering fire from the ditches as well as from the Yankee breastworks about 100 yards away, they precipitated themselves on the foe with such a determined rush that they were in the ditches before the enemy were aware of it, and captured hundreds of prisoners and made themselves masters of about one-half of the captured works in a few minutes.

Now, let me say right here that was one of the most brilliant charges made during the war and against much greater odds than are often given in history. Our regiment, the Sixty-fourth Georgia, commanded by Captain Pritchett, was in front of the brigade, and had to file right up a ravine behind the works before we could form in line. Here we lost our colonel, John W. Evans, who, while not on duty, would go into the battle with us. He jumped up on the bank of the ditch and was waving his hat and cheering when he was shot and instantly killed.

As we went rushing up the ravine the prisoners came pouring down the hill from the breastworks, and some one shouted (I never knew who) to "carry out the prisoners," and most of Company K, the one to which I belonged, started out, when General Mahone, who commanded the division, called to Captain Pritchett. I ran and told him General Mahone was calling him and as he turned and ran up General Mahone ordered him to take the regiment up to support his brigade. Captain Pritchett rushed off, but ran a little too far to the right and jumped into the ditch, which was full of Yankees, and was captured, as was Lieutenant Morn, of Company G.

I was close behind them, but seeing the danger in time dropped down behind a little traverse about 3 feet high. Glancing around I met a sight that was enough to appal the stoutest heart. The ground just in my rear seemed to be swept clean by the storm of shot and shell across it from every direction, and I did not stop to think, but began to fire and load as rapidly as I possibly could, when just as I raised up on my knees for a fourth shot over the traverse in my front a bullet cut the hair just back of my right ear, coming so close that it burned the skin without breaking it.

Of course I ducked my head and felt for blood, and was relieved to find none. Soon there was a shout from the Virginia boys just a few feet to my left: "Look at those d—d negroes over there!" and looking hastily up I saw the barrels of several guns. Just overhead, aimed at the Virginians, who greeted the holders of the guns with a quick volley. I found that place a leetle too warm for comfort, and by a quick somersault threw myself into a partly sheltered nook in the ditch below me on my left, but soon found that I was the target of some Yankees about twenty or thirty feet down the ditch, so with a plunge was across in the ranks of the Virginians in comparative safety. Here I had leisure to look around, and beheld the death of many a brave man and officer who rushed, as it was, into the very jaws of death.

Here Captain Craven, Company A, Captain Buren, Company I, from Columbus, Georgia, with Lieutenant Captain Boer, also of Company I, were shot down and their bodies literally riddled with bullets; while Captain Joe McKee, Clark Rifles, Third Georgia regiment, and Sergeant Ben Liddon, Home Guards, from Morgan County, were instantly killed with hundreds of other brave boys, whose lives were sacrificed; but not in vain, for the works were held stubbornly by our men and for nearly two hours a constant fire was kept up on both sides, and loaded guns were cocked and with bayonets fixed, were thrown over the embankments, and everything to make the place dangerous as well as unpleasant to hold. Later in the day about 1 o'clock, the lack of water became apparent; for with the stench of battle in our nostrils and the scent of blood all around us, (for the ditches were full of dead negroes and Yankees) and a hot sun overhead, our thirst grew almost intolerable.

A great many, myself among the number, crawled back to the ravine for water, but the springs were so crowded that the water was mudded so as not to be fit to drink, while the branch was filled with dead and wounded, and there was nothing to do but wait and take chances to fill canteens.

There being a lull in the firing, we lay down and waited. While waiting Saunder's brigade came marching up the ravine, and took position further to the right, and just in the rear of where the works had not been recaptured, and about 4 o'clock orders were given for every man of the Virginia and Georgia brigades to go up to the works, and when two mortar guns, which were being carried up the hill, were placed just on the right of the recaptured works, should fire two rounds each, and when Saunder's men were seen coming in sight up the hill on our right we were to yell with all our might, and fire our guns as rapidly as possible, whether we saw anyone to shoot at or not.

The instructions were carried out to the letter and from the time that Saunder's men came creeping up the hill till they were in the ditches with the works in full possession of our forces seemed but a very few minutes, and the battle of the Crater was over.

Now, all these things happened much more quickly than it takes to describe them. I will close by quoting Corporal Jessee Reese, of Warrenton, Ga., of the Twenty-second Georgia, who made use of the expression in your columns some time ago, as well as in Jackson hospital, Richmond, Va.: "The Crater was a little the hottest place while it lasted I ever got into."

John O. Hilsman,
Co. K, 64th Ga. Regt.

OUR GREAT LEE AT HIS BEST.

(Richmond Times.)

I distinctly recall the famous place and the memorable conditions surrounding the great soldier when I saw him the first time. I was then a fairly-observant youth, in my twentieth year, a period at which we are apt to receive and retain vivid impressions of any noted event or famous personage, personally seen and known. As one grows old there is a commendable tendency to indulge a reminiscent mood. As a matter of blended fact and sentiment, most of us like to look back and lovingly dwell on the pleasant and the notable things of the past in which we were actors. At times I am given to such moods of tender and pathetic, sober and serious reflections. Then, over the kindly stretch of nearly two-score years I would call up in proudest memory the fadeless portraiture of that manly, heroic figure, so firmly and gracefully seated on his noble, trusty steed. In recalling my first view and impression, I take it to be well within the province of this sketch to state the place, circumstances, environments, as they were all quite remarkable, now forming illustrious pages in American history. They also help to depict to some extent the grand character of one of the greatest soldiers of the past two centuries.

It was about noon of September 17, 1862, at Sharpsburg, during the terrible, sanguinary and indecisive battle of Antietam. Here I first saw General Robert E. Lee, riding along the firing line. He was inquiring for General Jackson. I heard him make the inquiry of several officers. I was so impressed with the noble bearing, the stately appearance of the man, and his good, substantial mount, that I was induced to ask an officer near me if he was not some general officer. I received the prompt reply that the distinguished-looking man was no less a personage that General Robert E. Lee. I had thought before I put my question that he was one of our generals, but I had no idea he was our great commander-in-chief. He wore no sign of his exalted rank. His good, gray uniform displayed no ornaments of any kind, including the high grade of his official position. Still the personal appearance of such a well-developed, manly figure was imposing and attractive.

I was not so greatly surprised at being informed that the dignified, commanding-looking soldier was R. E. Lee, but I was surprised and felt quite uneasy that he should be where he was likely to be struck down any second. I so expressed myself, at the same time remarking that I did not suppose General McClellan was in a mile of the battlefield. It is not generally the rule that the commander-in-chief advances with his men under a terrific, sweeping fire of rifles and musketry. His subordinates, from brigadier generals down, are expected to do this, and, occasionally, his major-generals lend their assuring presence in a hot and doubtful struggle. I readily recall two gallant old brigadier-generals—Paul Semmes and M. D. Corse—that I had the honor to serve under, who always led their men in any and every general engagement with the enemy.

So it came about that I first saw General Robert E. Lee, to know him, at Sharpsburg, September 17, 1862, while the great battle of Antietam was "in full swing;" while it was raging; while some 120,000 men were making the gamest fight of the nineteenth century, not excepting Waterloo, which, in some respects, resembled Antietam, but with very different results, Napoleon being defeated and leaving the field with a badly-routed army, Lee, with his heroic army occupying and resting on the field of battle, the entire day after battle, and then the night of September 18th, retiring deliberately, and in good order, carrying all his guns and baggage. When I saw General Lee he looked firm and resolute, perfectly self-poised, confident, dignified. He evidently felt that his 39,000 veterans could hold the field and carry it over the 80,000 men composing the Federal host.

I saw our great Lee at his best, with the light of battle in his eye, heroism in every feature. It was during the most critical and trying part of that most desperate day, when the deadly, bloody tide of dubious conflict was fiercely, turbulently ebbing and flowing; when the red vintage of human gore flowed in cornfields and apple orchards; in open hollows and on wooded slopes; often blushing the pure waters of the modest streams and staining the shapely leaves of the sheltering forest. On this terrible, this ensanguined field, at midday, the struggle for supremacy was most eventful and uncertain. It could not be told where the bird of victory would fold its weary and triumphant wings. It was here "the red badge of courage" flaunted its crimson hues over all the fair face of peaceful nature. It was here that knightly deeds far outshone the mythical splendor of that vaunted time "when knighthood was in flower." It was here that "captains courageous" only emulated the superb courage of their men, each and all bravely doing amid so many heroes dead and dying. And it was here and then the heroic manhood of Robert E. Lee was tried and tested, and found equal to the emergency of holding his battle lines of offence and defence against the powerful enemy.

The night after the battle, after taking counsel with his generals, he dismissed them with the words: "Gentlemen, if General McClellan wishes to fight to-morrow, we will give him battle; see that your commands are held ready. Good night." The Federal commander-in-chief did not see fit to renew the battle the next day. As I take it, upon a fair and reasonable estimate, the relative strength of the two armies the morning of September 18th would be about 30,000 Confederates and 70,000 Federals. This would be placing the Confederate loss at from 9,000 to 10,000 men, the Federal loss at from 12,000 to to 15,000 the preceding day. In simply stating a situation of fact, now a matter of history, I have no comment to make as to the reason entertained by a general with 70,000 men declining to engage in battle with another general who did not have 30,000 available men.

The two armies were convenient to each other; they were in plain sight of one another; on the same field they had fought on the day before; there was no long, weary marching necessary to precede the deadly battle of musketry, the loud thunder of artillery. But, forsooth, there was no fighting at Sharpsburg or Antietam the 18th day of September, 1862. History will securely preserve the name and fame of Robert E. Lee among the truest, noblest, most peerless soldiers of any age or clime. A Northern historian has been kind and honest and brave enough to write down the great battle of Sharpsburg or Antietam as "a drawn battle." In this brief sketch I have only written of it in a general way, principally to recall the first time I saw the greatest of soldiers, the noblest of men; a name respected and honored alike by friend and foe, far and near, at home and abroad—Robert E. Lee. C. A. R.

Richmond, Va.

A Brave Drummer Boy.

Chester, July 28.—Ex-Senator J. S. McDaniel of this county, who was lieutenant in the Sixth South Carolina regiment of infantry during the War Between the Sections, has been for a year or more in correspondence with Capt. George C. Smith of the Eighty-first New York regiment, whose home is now in Middletown, N. Y. In a recent letter Capt. Smith writes as follows: "On the 24th of June, 1864, Hagood's division charged us in front of Petersburg and they met with quite a loss. I can never forget that afternoon. Among the prisoners was a mere boy, a drummer of some South Carolina regiment. He had followed his officers through a terrible charge. I was on the front works and firing had ceased. I stood on the works and this brave little fellow ran up to me. I stooped down and raised him over the works. I said: 'You little rat, why did you come over in such a shower of bullets.' He said: 'Lieutenant, I always go where my company does, and he ran down the traverse with his officers and yet had his drumsticks in his hand. I have often thought I would like much to know who the brave little fellow was. You know how things are in such a time and I could not ask questions. It seems to me now that his regiment was the Nineteenth or Twenty-first South Carolina."

If that brave little fellow is still alive or any of his comrades of Hagood's troops recall this incident and the name, Capt. George C. Smith of Middletown, N. Y., will be pleased to have information on the subject.—Special to the State.

— In the boiler explosion on the gunboat Bennington, 49 men were killed and 55 were wounded, some of whom will die. The vessel was lying in San Diego harbor, California, when the disaster occurred. Lieut. N. K. Perry, a native of Columbia, was killed. Lieut. Victor Blue, also a native of this State, was saved from injury by having been taken to a hospital the day before with appendicitis. Geo. F. Knox, hospital attendant, and a native of Laurens was also killed. There were 250 men aboard the ship when the accident occurred and many men were hurled or forced to jump into the sea by the terrific explosion, which lifted part of the deck.

— James R. Gray, editor of the Atlanta Journal, and H. H. Revil, a representative in the Georgia legislature from Meriwether County, had a fight at a prominent place on Peachtree street in Atlanta. They were separated before damage was done. The fight arose over an editorial article in the Journal dealing with Mr. Revil.

— According to report the Sultan of Turkey is to have a bodyguard of dogs. He has lost faith in men and women, who conspire against him. A pack of man-tracking dogs has been ordered in England for service at the royal palace at Constantinople.

Telling Your Own Fortune.

Did the girl ever live who did not at some time want to have her fortune told? The very fact that sensible people laugh at the idea of "crossing the palm" of some old woman, dirty and greasy as it is, with silver, and learning all the hidden things of life, makes the average girl all the more eager to try her fate. Young girls have been known to slip away from home in the dusk of evening when the papers announced that Madame Somebody would spend a few days in town reading palms, to listen in breathless silence to the vague promises of happiness the impostor told so glibly in exchange for fifty cents or a dollar; so it may not come amiss to tell them of a sure and simple rule by which they may tell their own fortunes without the cost of a penny. Aside from the economy of the plan it has the added charm of "coming true," and everyone knows the fortune teller misses the mark woefully at times.

"And how is the fortune telling to be done?" some impatient young girl asks. Just sit quietly down and look into your own heart and life in the clear sunlight of truth, and the fortune telling will be easy. No murky atmosphere for this important duty, but light streaming in everywhere to clearly show forth your future. Most girls want to know if they are to be happy, and that is a very important question. If you are happy now and possessed of a sunny disposition you may set it down that the years to come with all their struggles can never rob you of the priceless possession of a good temper, and it is on this sure foundation that happiness rests. If you are morbid, and everybody slights you now, in your opinion, and life looks gloomy, and people misunderstand you generally, why, unhappiness is your portion now and for all time unless you bring yourself up sharply and mend your ways.

Most of us want to hear that we are to have wealth, or at least that poverty will never overtake us. Money is an excellent thing, but there are finer and better things in life even than money. The young girl who is content to wear sensible dresses and hats because her father cannot afford extravagant ones, will hardly live to be dependent on charity after a while, for she is learning the lesson of prudence and good sense, and it is reasonable to suppose she will never come to want. But the girl who creates a "scene" if she cannot have exactly what she wants when she wants it will not have wealth, in the natural order of things. Reckless extravagance will clothe anyone in rags as surely as will idleness, and it would be a foolish fortune teller who would promise wealth to a thriftless person.

The subject of health is still more clearly foretold in this kind of fortune telling, for she who eats all sorts of things at all times can readily predict her own future. If she despises plain, well-cooked food, eats unlimited candy and pastry between meals, is imprudent about draughts and damp feet, and sins recklessly against physical well-being, she may make up her mind that neither health nor happiness can crown her life, for Nature demands her price for every transgression. The girl who lives in the fresh, pure air as much as possible, eats substantial food, and wears sensible clothing may expect to enjoy long life; for she is setting her habits toward that end.

And last of all, every right-minded young girl is looking forward to a home of her own in the misty future. Whether or not she admits it, the description of the future husband is the most fascinating thing the fortune teller reveals, and henceforth she dreams night and day of the hero pictured for her mind's eager eye. When you get to the future husband part of your fortune take yourself sternly in hand and see if there lurks in your heart a desire to marry a man to reform him. If you have notions of that kind, look carefully about you at the older women who have had experience in such matters, and you will have your future portrayed exactly. The woman who is struggling with poverty, a drunken husband, and helpless children shows just what every silly girl may expect.

"There are exceptions to all rules," I hear some indignant young girls saying, and that is a fact. One or two men have gone over Niagara Falls alive, it is said, but it is still considered rather adventurous to try it. If young girls love the things that are pure and lovely and of good report and have the vice and evils of the world, they are hardly likely to go astray in affairs of the heart. The young woman who carefully chooses her associates, and refuses to be in the company of vulgar, profane, or intemperate young men will have little opportunity to form an unhappy life alliance.

Some of the people who patronize fortune tellers come out of the presence of the revealer of secrets, so-called, very indignant because they have heard things they did not like. Perhaps, when you quietly tell your own fortune, the voice of conscience will speak disagreeable things in your ears; but you have the consolation of knowing that you can turn squarely about and choquer every fault and failing in your life if you will. To be able to do this insures long life, peace, and happiness.—Forward.

How to Raise Boys.

The traveler had been struck by the change in the appearance of the farms along the road when he reached a certain neighborhood. These farms, which looked so much better than those passed earlier in the day, he was told by one who knew the country, were the property of the six sons of a woman whose home the traveler was then approaching. She had been left a widow with six boys, but she had so brought them up that all had done well.

Seeing this notable woman standing at her gate, the traveler asked to be introduced to her, and after the usual courtesies spoke of the fine appearance of her sons' farms, and of the respect in which they were held, and begged to be informed how their mother had managed to rear her numerous family so successfully.

"Well, suh," said the old lady, reflectively, "I reckon it was pra'ar an' hickory that did it." She had prayed fervently and in faith for guidance, and she had not spared the rod. And so she had brought up her boys to hard work and thrift and honesty, to be the pride of her age and the crown of her life.—Chicago Inter-Ocean.

Insect Pests of Millers.

"Millers have a good deal to contend with in modern times," said A. H. Hull, of Kansas City. "More than forty species of destructive moths and beetles infect granaries, some of which were only recently imported and some have been known as an enemy of stored grain ever since very ancient times. It takes a keen eye to detect in apparently sound wheat the presence of a 'granary weevil,' but if the grains have been stung by it incalculable injury may be done in a short time. Another destructive insect that infests mills is the flour moth, known as the scourge of the flour mill. These insects excel in web-spinning and sometimes mix up so much with the grain that the machinery is clogged and mills are stopped for long periods. The Indian meal moth excels in devouring the germs of wheat, injuring it for seed. A flat little beetle called the 'flour weevil' often makes its appearance in flour after it has been barrelled or bagged. They are the worst pests in the milling world that I can think of now, and I sometimes wonder that the American public is blessed with such excellent flour in the face of all this insect opposition." Milwaukee Free Press.

The Minister's Revenge.

The Rev. Thos. Mason had been settled in the town of Northfield, Mass., for life, says the Boston Herald. As he approached 70 years of age the people came to think that they wanted a younger minister.

"You want me to give up my flock," he said. "I am old and cannot easily find a new field of labor. If my young brother wants to take my place and you are satisfied, I will turn you over to him for $1,000."

The old clergyman's proposition was not considered unfair, and the money was paid to him.

Not long after a goodly number of the citizens were at the postoffice, among them the old parson. As they stood there a drover came up with a lot of hogs, which he was driving to market, and the people gathered around him.

"Friend Drover," said Mr. Mason, "what do you expect to get for that lot of hogs?"

The drover replied that he ought to get $600.

"I have done vastly better than that," said the old minister, casting a smiling glance around upon his former parishioners, a score of whom were there. "Not long since I sold a lot of just such critters—not half so decent looking as yours are—and I got $1,000 for 'em."

— A young man was taking the civil service examinations and was exasperated at the irrelevance of some of the questions. One question was. "How many British troops were sent to this country during the American Revolution?" The young man nibbled his pen for a moment in annoyance and then wrote the answer, "I don't know, but a darned sight more than went back."

— If all donkeys had long ears it would be necessary to change the style of masculine headgear.

— Society people make as much fuss about getting married as theatrical people do in getting divorced.

— You wouldn't know some people had ever been on earth if you didn't accidentally stumble on their tombstones.

— A man might give his wife more spending money if she wouldn't spend so much of it on things for him that he doesn't want.